THE RAGTIME SOCIETY

DEDICATED TO THE PRESERVATION OF CLASSIC RAGTIME

P.O. BOX 8 KING, ONT., CANADA

Volume 5, Number 5 November, 1966

By now you will have received our special flyer announcing the two new RSR releases:

"MISSISSIPPI VALLEY RAGTIME" (RSR-5) by Treb Tichenor

and

"THE OTHER SIDE OF RAGTIME" (RSR-6) by John Arpin

We feel this is a major accomplishment -- a pair of albums by two of the best-known and most active performers in ragtime today!

And, of course, it makes our combination price -- two records for $8.50 postpaid* -- a real bargain . . . just the thing for Christmas giving (or receiving).

There's real variety on these two LP's, both in the performers' styles and in the contents: everything from "Big Three" rags to Morton stomps and Arpin and Tichenor originals.

Start the new season off right -- get both these great new albums. There's a handy order form below for quick service -- use it today!

*A note to our overseas customers: Sorry, gang, but postal rates have just been upped for parcels going outside North America, and we're forced to pass the increase along to you. So, when ordering a single record, please add $1 for postage; for two records, add $1.50.

THE RAGTIME SOCIETY
P.O. BOX 8
KING, ONTARIO
CANADA

Please rush me:

___ copies of "MISSISSIPPI VALLEY RAGTIME" (RSR-5) by Treb Tichenor

___ copies of "THE OTHER SIDE OF RAGTIME" (RSR-6) by John Arpin

I enclose $_____ in payment. (1 record-$5.00; 2 records-$8.50)

NAME_____

ADDRESS_____

ragtime stock orchestrations

by Frank Powers

Maple Leaf Rag.

SCOTT JOPLIN.

Pub by Stark Music Co.

TRIO.

Maple Leaf Rag, 2.

Those fortunate enough to have seen the Max Morath television series, "Those Ragtime Years," may recall a sequence dealing primarily with the song plugging profession as it existed at that time. Among the topics discussed in this particular segment was the practice of publishers to deliver stock orchestrations to the dance bands at the more prominent restaurants and ballrooms. A stock orchestration can be described as a commercially published score for dance orchestra prepared by an arranger in the employ of the publisher. One of the characteristics of stock orchestrations is instrumental flexibility. That is to say that these scores can be played by a wide variety of instrumental combinations without a loss of musical continuity and completeness. These "stocks," as they have come to be known, can be purchased in any reasonably complete music store for a modest sum. This was true during the ragtime years and is true today.

CORRESPONDENTS

We are pleased to announce that Frank Powers has joined the staff of the Ragtime Society Newsletter as our correspondent in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Frank was born in Akron, Ohio on June 30, 1931. He became interested in traditional jazz and ragtime in High School. He began collecting records and playing jazz. While he was in college earning his degree in architecture, Frank played in several college jazz groups.

After two years in the Army, he began collecting jazz and ragtime sheet music and orchestrations. Many of these were the bases for the fine arrangements Frank did for the Queen City Jazz Band in which he played clarinet. He has also worked with the Gin Bottle Seven, the Dixieland Rhythm Kings, and the Boll Weevil Jass Band.

For the last several years Frank has been active as an archivist in the field of published jazz and ragtime.

Tom Shea

The producers of the Morath series had assembled a small dance orchestra typical of the period for the purpose of demonstrating the nature of orchestral music, vintage 1912. Among the most impressive of the tunes played was Raymond Birch's "Powder Rag." This was a correct reading by skilled legitimate musicians of a typical ragtime orchestration of the period. Max Morath was quick to point out the obvious corollary between the instrumentation and ensemble technique of this rather sedate little orchestra and the New Orleans jazz which was then developing.

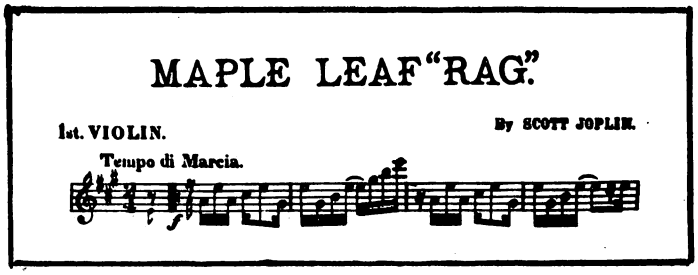
What about ragtime as orchestral music? Have we been misled into believing that ragtime is strictly piano music? I don't really believe so. It must be admitted that practically all the significant ragtime composers were skilled pianists and conceived their work at the keyboard. By the same token it is highly probable that ragtime was also conceived as dance music (as was jazz) and required orchestras for performance in the ballrooms.

It is also interesting to note that John Stark and Sons published a large catalogue of dance orchestrations concurrent to the piano sheet music. John Stark's advertising

literature on the back pages of these stocks reveals some of his deep understanding of his publications as well as a serious concern in regard to his orchestrations. E. J. Stark (the son) wrote the bulk of the Stark arrangements.

Several years ago I noticed a classified ad in the International Musician, official organ of the American Federation of Musicians, placed there by the late George Goodwin, a well known sheet music collector. Mr. Goodwin was advertising for ragtime sheet music. He stipulated in his ad that he was not interested in orchestrations. I couldn't imagine that there would be so many orchestrations around that they would get in the way of collecting the much valued piano solo sheet music. In any case, I pursued the idea by placing an ad accepting orchestrations. The response was quite gratifying and I was able to purchase several large groups of orchestrations.

An examination of the orchestrations began to reveal a technique and approach to orchestral music almost forgotten. The prime lead was almost always played by the


MAPLE LEAF "RAG."

1st. VIOLIN. By SCOTT JOPLIN.

Tempo di Marcia.

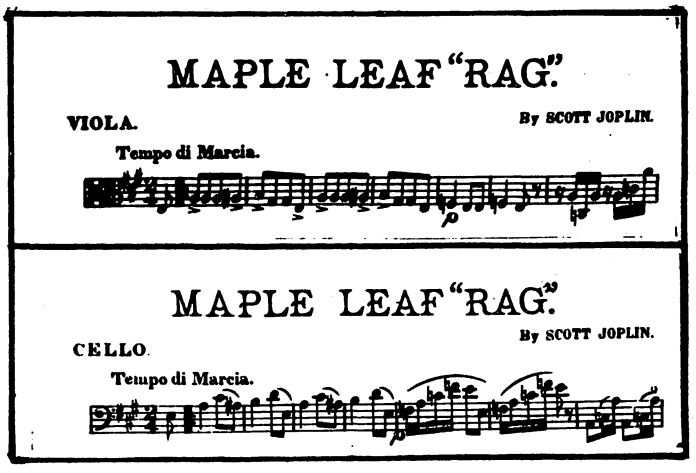
first violinist. In many cases he was the leader of the orchestra. Second violin was seldom called on for much other than double stop figures (two notes on the same

MAPLE LEAF "RAG.

2nd. VIOLIN. By SCOTT JOPLIN.

Tempo di Marcia.

beat) on the second and fourth beats. This tended to fill the basic mission of the guitar or banjo which had not yet appeared in the orchestra. Viola and cello were


MAPLE LEAF "RAG."

VIOLA. By SCOTT JOPLIN.

Tempo di Marcia.

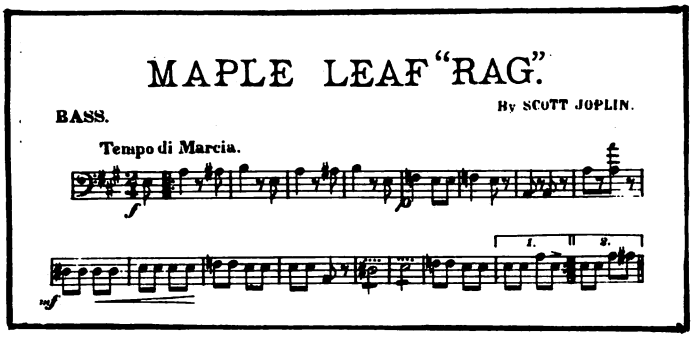
MAPLE LEAF "RAG."

By SCOTT JOPLIN.

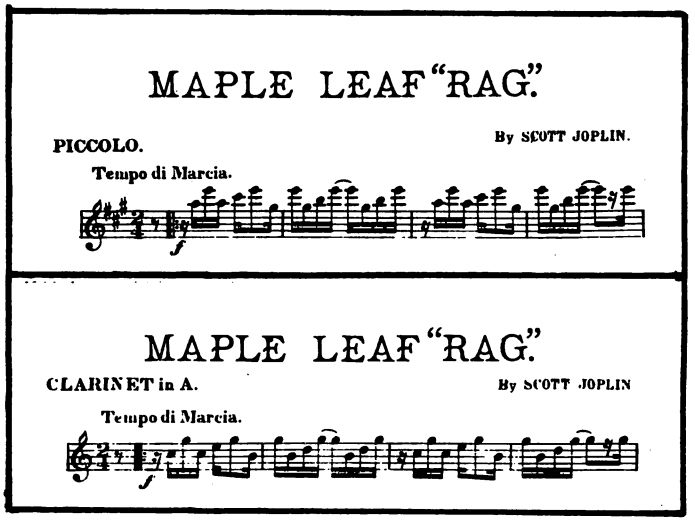
CELLO.

Tempo di Marcia.

only slightly more important, but their position was not necessarily critical to the orchestral effect. Bass viol played first and third bass line with bow for the most part.



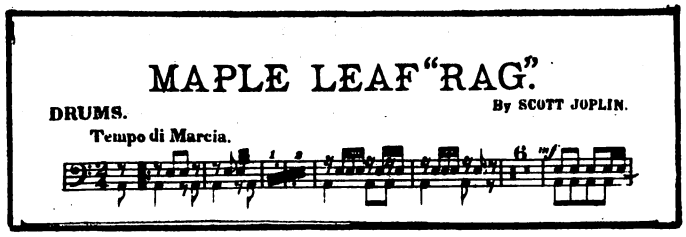
This string quintet could be said to form the backbone of the orchestra. The woodwinds



such as piccolo, flute and clarinet, played harmonic second parts to lead, obligato or doubled as needed. First cornet generally played lead except in passages beyond

the range and facility of the instrument. Second cornet, if included, would play second harmony to first cornet. Trombone played the bass line with lead and modulation

figures and some simple counterpoint. Drums played strict 2/4 time much in the manner


MAPLE LEAF "RAG."

DRUMS. By SCOTT JOPLIN.

Tempo di Marcia.

of a march drummer. He was expected to be able to play bells also as many of the orchestrations have passages for bells in the drum parts. Often other parts such as oboe or horns in F were included in the arrangement. One of the most interesting aspects of the technique was in the use of doubling, that is two or more instruments playing melody. This was possible due in part to the fact that the arranger was trying to make it possible to have a flexibility of instrumental combinations; however, much of the charm of these old arrangements derives from this feature.

In addition to the dance band orchestrations, full concert band scores were published. These were for the large "concert in the park" aggregations.

Toward the end of the ragtime era, publishers began to insert alto and tenor saxophone parts into the orchestrations. Banjo and tuba parts were also introduced about this time. I have found orchestrations in which leaders have written their own saxophone parts for their older arrangements so their libraries would not become obsolete. With these basic changes, the character of the music changed. Eventually the strings were to fade completely from view with only a redundant violin part remaining. Traditional woodwinds such as flute, piccolo and oboe vanished. The stage was set for the pioneer work of Don Redman in developing a jazz style for the large dance orchestra. Ragtime had ceased to be a significant part of the contemporary popular music scene.

It is my personal hope that someday these orchestrations can be resurrected and if possible recorded. As a practicing traditional jazz musician, I am of the firm opinion that this is not a job for a jazz musician, but belongs in the realm of the classically trained instrumentalist who is equipped to bring accurate interpretation to these challenging scores.

RECORD REVIEW

Tex Wyndham of Wilmington, Delaware, has sent us an excellent review of Knocky Parker's new four-LP set on Audiophile. To quote Tex: "I realize that the review is long, but considering 1) Dr. Parker's reputation in the field, 2) the magnitude of his undertaking in making these 61 tracks, 3) the fact that four records are involved, and 4) the obvious interest of this set to ragophiles, I thought it worthwhile to be thorough in the review. I think that detail is particularly important in this case, because the records are not exactly what one might expect (as a result of the celeste and the harpsichord work, primarily), and I would hate to see someone buy the records on the strength of a Newsletter review and be disappointed."

"Golden Treasury Of Ragtime" - Audiophile AP-89, -90, -91 & -92

Performed by:
John W. "Knocky" Parker - celeste (selections marked 'C'); harpsichord (selections marked 'H'); and piano (selections marked 'P').
Marvin "Smokey" Montgomery - banjo (appears on most selections).
Dick Brightwell - bass viol.
Ruth Brightwell - brushes.
Willson Davis - tuba (selections marked '*').

Available in monaural only, individually or in combination, @ $4.95 each, postpaid, from Audiophile Records Inc., P.O. Box 14, Mequon, Wis. 53092.

Side A	AP-89	Side B
1895 through 1899		1899 through 1901
1. Rastus On Parade - C, P		1. Whistlin' Rufus - H
2. At A Georgia Camp Meeting - P		2. Whittlin' Remus - H
3. Tickled To Death - C, P		3. Coon Band Concert - C, H
4. Ma Ragtime Baby - H		4. Prancing Pickaninnies - C, H
5. Scandalous Thompson - H		5. Creole Belles - C, H, P
6. Smokey Mokes - C, P		6. That Mobile Prance - C, H
7. Dusty Dudes - C		7. Possum and 'Taters - C
8. A Bunch Of Blackberries - H		8. Double Fudge - P
1902 through 1906	AP-90	1906 through 1908
1. St. Louis Rag* -P		1. Iola - H
2. Hiawatha - C, H		2. Holy Moses* - P
3. St. Louis Tickle* - C		3. The Smiler - C, H
4. Tennessee Tantalizer - C, P		4. Red Wing - C, P
5. Florida Rag - C, H		5. Missouri Rag - H
6. Coon Band Parade - P		6. Virginia Rag - C, P
7. Kinklets* - P		7. Wild Cherries - C, H
1908 through 1909	AP-91	1909
1. Dusty - H		1. Sappho Rag * - P
2. The Peach - C, H, P		2. Darky Todale* - P
3. Ham And ---- - C, H, P		3. Rose Wood* - P
4. Hot Chocolate - C		4. Apple Jack - C, H
5. Poison Ivy Rag - P		5. Pork and Beans - C, H
6. The Thriller* - P		6. Vanity Rag - P
7. Kalamity Kid - C, H		7. Wiggle Rag - C, P
8. Porcupine Rag - C		
1910 - 1911	AP-92	1911 through 1913
1. Silver Bell - C, H		1. Horse Shoe Rag * - C, P
2. Live Wires* - P		2. Hyacinth Rag* - C, P
3. Chatterbox Rag - C, H		3. Red Rambler* - P
4. Honeysuckle Rag - H		4. Black Diamond Rag - C, H
5. Tar Babies - H		5. Slippery Elm Rag* -P
6. Minstrel Man* - C, P		6. Red Onion Rag* - C
7. Cum Bac Rag - H		7. Elephant Rag* - P
8. Winter Garden Rag* - P		8. Crazy Bones Rag* - P

The most interesting aspect of this set of LP's is Dr. Parker's heavy use of celeste and harpsichord in addition to the piano. The sparse liner notes, which are identical on each of the four records, explain the reliance on these instruments in the following manner:

> "When one listens to a long series of ragtime pieces, he has an impression of redundancy, much the same as though he were listening to a series of waltzes or, for that matter, nearly any other kind of music, all of the same general style. ...In order to present this program in the most enjoyable manner, Dr. Parker plays piano, celeste and harpsichord - not exactly a traditional procedure. This variation, however, plus the accompaniment, does much to lend freshness and life to these old pieces...."

After listening to this set several times, one can think of the following arguments against Dr. Parker's use of celeste and harpsichord in this collection:

1) For better or for worse, Dr. Parker has a more delicate approach to playing ragtime than most contemporary ragtimers. This delicacy is greatly emphasized by the celeste, with its almost effeminate sound, and by the harpsichord, with its archaic, fuzzy sound.

2) Dr. Parker has deviated somewhat from the written scores, presumably to accomodate the various limitations of the harpsichord and celeste. Adapting music composed for one instrument to another is always a tricky business if the spirit of the original is to be preserved. The result here, in many cases, makes one harpsichord tune sound just like the others - and the same goes for the celeste. Consequently, these instruments tend to create, rather than relieve, monotony in the overall program.

3) The selections have been edited and spliced between the strains of the tunes so that many tracks employ two of Dr. Parker's instruments, and some use all three. After switching from celeste to harpsichord and back again, some tracks begin to sound like the mechanical music machines usually found on carnival merry-go-rounds.

The celeste and harpsichord provide some interesting moments in these records, to be sure. However, all things considered, I think that neither instrument has anything in particular to contribute to ragtime. The program would have been improved if more tunes had been played on the piano, with the other instruments thrown in as an occasional novelty.

Turning to the other aspects of the set, one finds several impressive features in the program. First, most of the sixty-one rags are not currently available on records. This feature should appeal to the listener who wants some variety in his collection and to the performer who might want to compare his interpretation of a rag with someone else's. (Repeats of strains are often omitted in order to compress sixty-one tracks onto four LP's but, to my knowledge, all of the music in each rag is played at least once during the performance.)

Second, virtually every important composer of ragtime below the level of Scott Joplin, James Scott and Joseph Lamb is represented in the collection. Thus, the set presents a capsule survey of a large part of the classic ragtime field. Although the Big Three are not included, Dr. Parker has already covered Joplin and Scott comprehensively in previous collections. (The liner notes do not give composer credits, by the way. No information is given about the rags other than the titles and approximate dates - which are probably the copyright dates.)

Third, the accompaniment is excellent. Purists might cringe at the thought of accompanied rags, but the accompanists here are skilled, well rehearsed, and appropriately unobtrusive. Particularly when tubaist Davis is present, the accompaniment brings a delightfully earthy quality to the performances that has sometimes been lacking in Dr. Parker's previous unaccompanied collections.

Finally, those who have Dr. Parker's earlier recordings on Audiophile will know that 1) he is a clean, relaxed and talented ragtime pianist and 2) the fidelity of Audiophile records is incomparably good.

Dr. Parker's many fans will probably wish to have all four of these LP's. Dedicated ragophiles will also probably enjoy the entire set. However, for those persons who are not sure that they can take quite this much harpsichord and celeste, I'll offer this suggestion - the set gets better as it goes along, so start off with AP-92 and work your way back until you reach the breaking point.

-Tex Wyndham

<u>TAPR, NEW EDITION</u>

We have a limited supply of "They All Played Ragtime" in stock. The price has gone up to $4.50 postpaid, but in our opinion, is well worth it. Features: new cover design (by David Stone Martin); new photo section; new section on the current rag scene; <u>plus</u> fifteen complete rag scores (these alone are worth the price of the book): PAN-AM RAG, Turpin; CALLIOPE RAG, James Scott; THE ALASKAN RAG, Lamb; PEAR BLOSSOMS, Scott Hayden; MISSOURI ROMP, CENTURY PRIZE and SILVER ROCKET, Arthur Marshall; THE GOLDEN HOURS and ONE FOR AMELIA, Max Morath; OPERA HOUSE RAG, Bob Darch; BUSINESS IN TOWN and FRIDAY NIGHT, Donald Ashwander; GOTHENBURG RAG, Peter Lundberg; BRUN CAMPBELL EXPRESS, Tom Shea; and CHESTNUT VALLEY RAG, Trebor Tichenor.

Order yours now!

BUFFALO EVENING NEWS
Saturday, September 10, 1966

Those Old Piano Rolls, Gone Forever? Guess Again

By TOM BUCKHAM

ONE OF BUFFALO'S newest businesses is doing its best to bring back a nearly forgotten pastime—gathering around the old player piano for a spirited sing-along.

Just a month ago, QRS Music Rolls Inc. moved from the Bronx to a new home on the third floor of the old Thomas Flyer automobile plant at 1200 Niagara St., and production has started up on many of the 3000 different music rolls the company catalogs for player pianos, which came back into fashion along with wide polka dot ties.

The president of QRS is Ramsi P. Tick, formerly manager of the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra, who spent the past three years preparing to make a longtime hobby his full-time occupation.

Mr. Tick, who has two player pianos and a collection of 1000 music rolls, used the time to learn the business, to negotiate purchase of the nation's oldest and largest piano-roll maker for an undisclosed price, and bring it to Buffalo.

* * *

AS QRS PICKS UP steam here you're likely to find Mr. Tick right on the production line, rubber-stamping titles on the rolls as they whisk off the perforating machines.

"The real love of my life is administration and promotion, but in order to get us going I've done almost everything, including shipping and production work," he says.

QRS dates back to the turn of the century, though no one seems to know exactly when it was founded in the Bronx or what the name stands for.

In the Roaring '20s, heyday of the player piano, the company made over 11 million rolls a year. But the popularity of radio brought a decline in the player piano business and QRS was on its way out when it was bought in 1931 by Max Kortlander, a popular pianist in his day, who had headed the company's recording department.

Mr. Kortlander, who died in 1961, saw the company through hard times, and QRS is "the only one of 20 or more companies in the business who survived the Depression," Mr. Tick says. Today QRS has only two competitors.

* * *

THE COMPANY has ample space in its new 13,000 square-foot upstairs location on Niagara St., Mr. Tick points out. The 30 employes, "many of whom came from New York to Buffalo to stay or to train new people," work one shift daily.

"Without knocking ourselves out we can produce 2000 rolls a day," Mr. Tick says.

One of the faithful employes who came from New York is Mrs. Margaret Dobbins, an inventory controller, who has worked for the company 21 years and amazes Mr. Tick with her photographic knowledge of numbers.

Unable to recall the inventory number of one of the 50,000 rolls stockpiled at one end of the shop, Mr. Tick calls out: "Dottie . . . 'Blue Skies?' "

"Seventy - seven - o - nine," comes the instant reply.

* * *

ESSENTIAL to production are 3000 master rolls stored in a fireproof concrete vault at one end of the shop. From these originals, placed on the perforators, the commercial piano rolls are produced.

Each new paper copy, patterned by countless rectangular and circular holes, comes off the perforator in a 20 - foot strip. The song title is stamped on, tabs are added and the paper is wound around its cardboard core. The product is put in a labeled red and white container and there you have it—one swinging boxfull of "We'll Sing in the Sunshine."

The production process reveals a great advantage of the company's new home: the maker of the piano roll paper, the Franklin Cowan Paper Co. Inc., and the maker of the core tubes, Paper Tubes Inc., both are located right downstairs. (More than 30 companies have offices and/or production facilities in the Thomas Flyer plant).

* * *

ONLY FOUR U. S. companies make player pianos these days but Mr. Tick says QRS is making about 500,000 rolls a year, indicating there are more than a few pedal-pumping virtuosos still around.

An indication that younger generations may be discovering the player piano is the popularity of pop music rolls. QRS turns out snappy player renditions of many recent hit records, such as "Strangers in the Night" (Frank Sinatra) and "A Taste of Honey" (Tijuana Brass).

QRS also makes "long play" rolls of scores from hit Broadway shows, and a special kind of roll for a player organ made by one company.

But for the sentimental, who remember the player piano in its prime, the company keeps the master rolls of old tunes recorded for QRS by Jelly Roll Morton, Fats Waller, James P. Johnson and Phil Ohmon.

* * *

REMEMBER "Tell Me," played by Max Kortlander? It's said that this tune, which still is on the QRS roll call, brought Mr. Kortlander the money he needed to buy the company and keep the industry alive, Mr. Tick says.

Orders for QRS rolls have come from as far as Japan and Okinawa, and from a surprising number of corporate customers such as Disneyland, Macy's department store in New York, Marshall Field in Chicago and J. L. Hudson in Detroit.

Mr. Tick's prize possession is the old recording piano used to make the master rolls. It is a vintage upright connected by pneumatic tubes to a perforating machine. Strike a key and a corresponding hole is punched in the master roll.

* * *

THE PIANO is undergoing repair, so Buffalo's first player recording has yet to be made. In the meantime, Mr. Tick is looking for a pianist—someone who "is not just a musician but an arranger," he says.

Certain songs are recorded in two different styles — either jazzed up or in the old "marimba" fashion with honky-tonk frills.

"While we make modern and modern-sounding arrangements, every once in a while you find someone who likes a song in the old style," Mr. Tick says.

"People often say, why don't you use natural styling and record the way they play in nightclubs and cocktail lounges?"

"First, the kind of music you hear at a sing-along around the player piano is different from what you hear at such places.

"Second, a player piano can do things a human can't. There are devices on the recording piano that allow more than 10 keys to be played at one time."

* * *

CHANCES ARE player music never will regain the popularity it enjoyed back in the Roaring '20s, if only because those simple-looking pneumatic pedals and tone controls add about $400 to the cost of a standard piano.

But if you see a Flapper asking your favorite nightclub pianist for "Those Old Piano Roll Blues," maybe she's real

Ramsi Tick, left, and Rudolph Martin, perforator machine operator, look over a player piano roll that has just come off the machine.

ANNOUNCING CHAPTER III REPRINT CLUB

The first mail-out date in Chapter III of the Reprint Club is fast approaching. Why not make this season a smashing success by learning some new rags. We have some dandies to offer along with a few real sticklers to help you while away those dull winter days.

Subscriptions have been filtering in slowly and we would like to see a much more resounding response. HOW ABOUT IT!

The first mail-out consists of these gems:

1. COLONIAL GLIDE by PAUL PRATT (1910)
2. SPRINGTIME OF LOVE by JAMES SCOTT (1919)
3. THE CAULDRON RAG by AXEL CHRISTENSEN (1909)
4. HALLEY'S COMET RAG by HARRY J. LINCOLN (1910)
5. HIFALUTIN RAG by HENRY LODGE (1918)

and a lot more jewels to come in subsequent mail-outs!
Subscriptions are $10.00 with terms and conditions as always.
LET'S HEAR FROM YOU!!
Use form below for your convenience:

Please enroll me in "REPRINT CLUB - CHAPTER III"
Enclosed is my subscription of $10.00 by Cheque___ Money order___ Cash___

NAME:_____

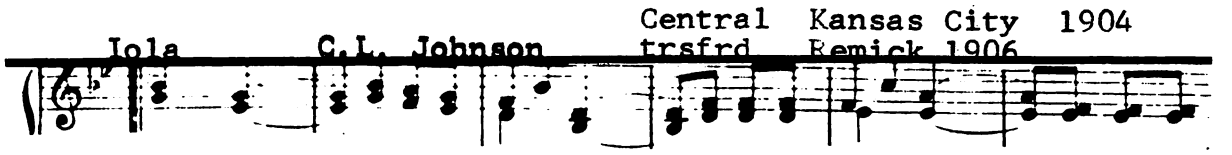
ADDRESS:_____

sounds familiar

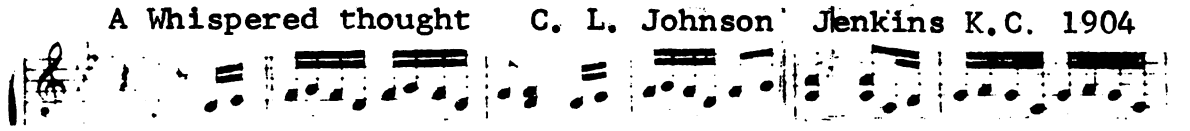
by ROGER HANKINS

Early piano rags with their emphasis on rhythmic and harmonic appeal had to face stiff competition in their bid to gain popularity. Vocal music enjoyed a wide audience as did the flood of piano solos which concentrated on traditional melodic appeal. In this latter group were Marches, Waltzes and the relatively new intermezzos and characteristics which flourished before the dance craze began around 1910.

A casual glance would suggest that this early music has long sice been dead and buried, but such is not the case. Many of these piano solos were resurrected in whole or in part, but composer credits usually went to the person clever enough to rearrange the old music. The year 1940 saw a revival of "Iola" (an Indian intermezzo), one of Charles L. Johnson's

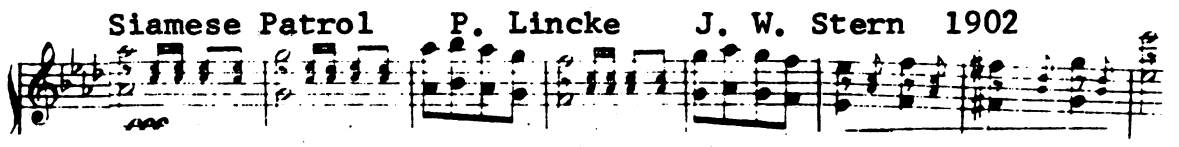


biggest hits. Johnson's name, however, was never mentioned. The new name given the song was "Playmates," with composer credits going to Saxie Dowell. Another Johnson number, "A Whispered Thought" (Novelette), needs only slight



alteration to become "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer."

The Andrews sisters had a wide assortment of hits during the early war years. One of them, "Pennsylvania Polka," has little to distinguish it from Charles Hunter's "Queen of Love." Another one of their hits, "Nickle Serenade" ("Once a soldier met a maid, after he was on parade..."), was lifted bodily from "Zallah" (an Egyptian Intermezzo) by William Loraine. Two other popular songs of the early 40's, "Amapola" and "Green Eyes," seem to owe a debt to "Amina" (Egyptian serenade) by Paul Lincke of "Glow-Worm" fame. Another interesting Lincke composition is the 1902 "Siamese Patrol" (Characteristic) with its quaint



dedication to Tschulalongkorn - King of Siam. The opening melody is one of the many close cousins to the "Third Man Theme." There also can be no doubt that the trio of "Siamese Patrol" was the inspiration of Cole Porter's "You Do Something to Me" since Edward Marks revived the number in 1923 as "March of the Siamese."

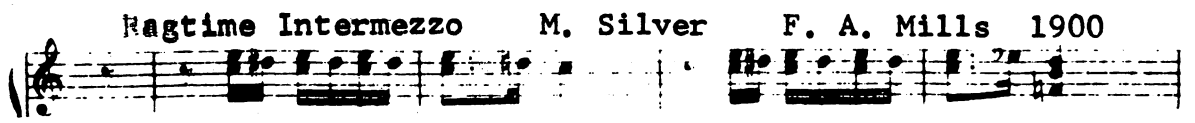
The biggest hit of the early war period was "Beer Barrel Polka." Like "Third Man Theme" it has many similarities to older tunes although none used exactly the same combination of notes. "Dreamy Eyes" (Characteristic) by Lampe comes close. "Melody at Twilight" (Intermezzo) by Fred S. Stone incorporates a different melodic line than "Beer Barrel," but follows the entire 16-bar chord pattern of the chorus. The two songs make natural and interesting accompaniments to each other. The only other hit song to rival the popularity of "Beer Barrel" at this time, particularly with the American soldier, was "Don't Sit Under the

Apple Tree." This melody can be found intact in "Happy Heine" (Characteristic)

by J. Bodewalt Lampe. This could mean that the American soldiers were singing a German song if it weren't for the fact that both tunes could have been suggested by the much earlier "Long, Long Ago." Lampe also had a hand in "Music! Music! Music!" ("Put another nickle in..."). His "Glad Girl" (Idyl) of 1915 was an

early forerunner.

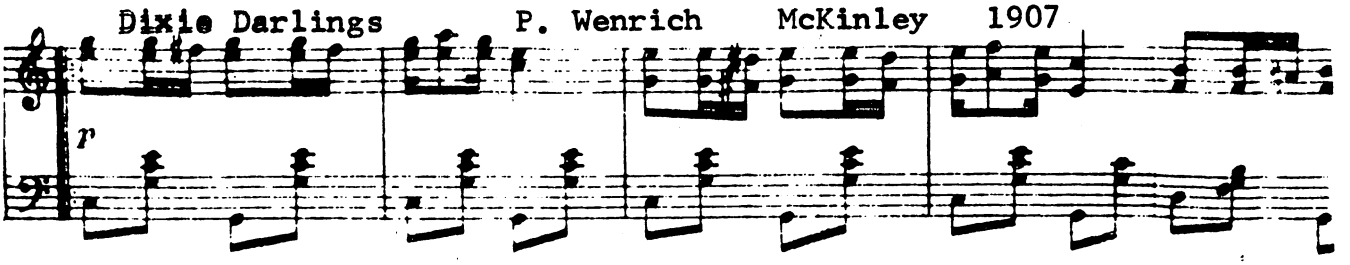
The middle and late 40's saw a continuing parade of this early music. "Sentimental Journey" is somewhat reflected in "Rag-Time Intermezzo" (A Synco-



pated Symphony) by Maxwell Silver. A 1905 characteristic "Foolishness" by

C. A. Grimm has the same melody as the later (1917) "Bells of St. Mary's" which enjoyed a revival in 1945. Arthur Godfrey had a million record hit in 1947 with "Too Fat Polka" ("I don't want her..."). The first four words and general melodic drift are suggestive of "Arrah Wanna" (Irish, Indian Intermezzo)

by Theodore Morse. Another 1947 tune, "Across the Alley from the Alamo," is based on the chordpatterns and melody line of "Dixie Darlings" by Percy Wenrich.



It also adds to the list of later day coincidences so common with much of Wenrich's work. There is his obsession with "Dolly" and "Sunflowers," which had its modern day counterparts involved in a quarter million dollar, out of court settlement. Blesh and Janis point out that his first genuine rag "Ashy Africa" was published by Frank Buck, who years later became the most famous African explorer of his time if not of all time. 1910 saw the publication of his "Alamo Rag," an early example of blues harmony, wherein the virtues of the Texas shrine were extolled. Forty years after his "Dixie Darlings," the San Antonio Chamber of Commerce sued the publisher of "Across the Alley from the Alamo" for publishing false information about this shrine. It seems that there is no alley anywhere near the Alamo.

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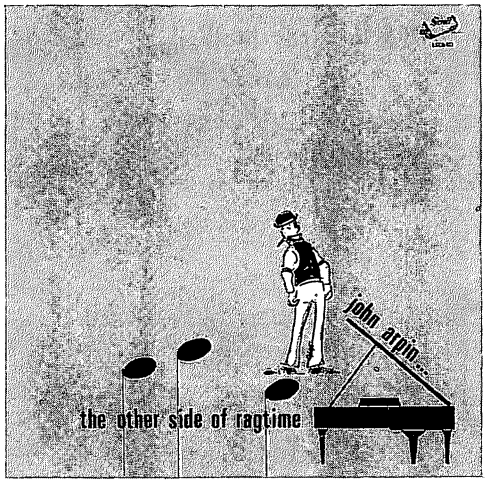

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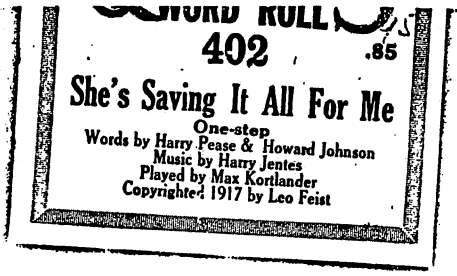
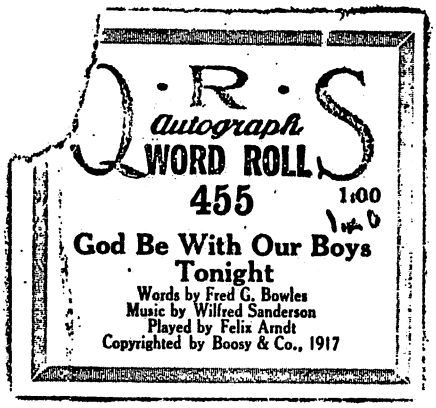
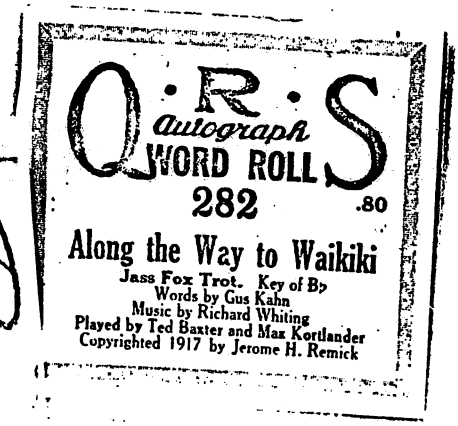
ADDRESS:

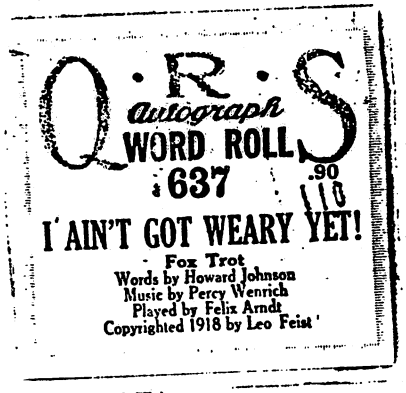
Shown below are some examples of the types of early QRS roll labels which Mike Montgomery will be incorporating into his extensive publication, soon to be released. We understand that the book will contain a reproduction of every QRS label ever made. Note the spellings of the word Jass - Jazz; the artists names who were young men at that time; how the word 'rag' was casually inserted, etc.

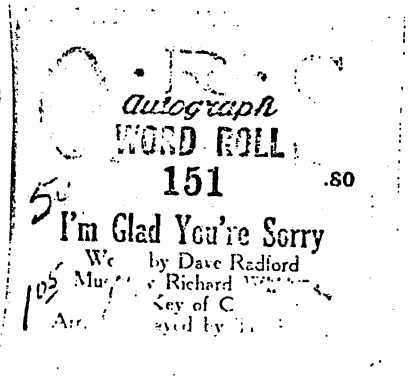


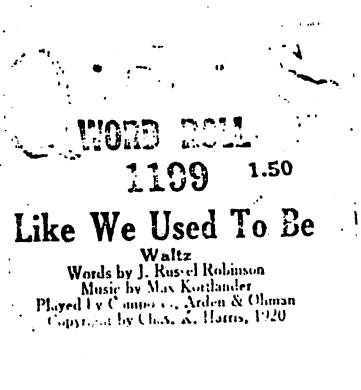
WORD ROLL
226 .80
KUU LOKE ULA ULA
(My Red Red Rose)
Jazz Fox Trot. Key of B♭
Words by Jessie M. Glick
Music by F. Bowers
Played by Harold Scott and Jeff Watters
Copyrighted 1917 by Frederick V. Bowers

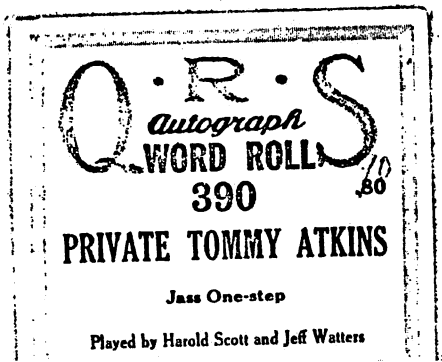


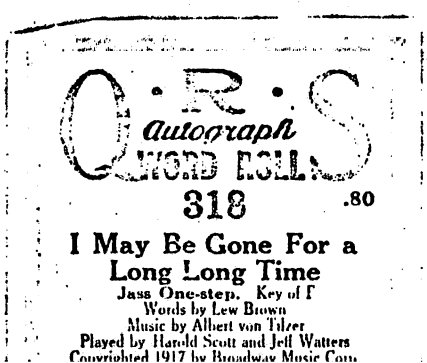


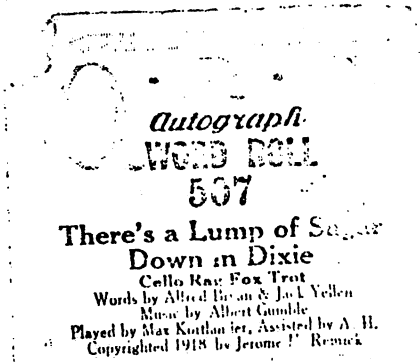









Q·R·S
Autograph
WORD ROLL
318 .80
I May Be Gone For a Long Long Time
Jass One-step. Key of F
Words by Lew Brown
Music by Albert von Tilzer
Played by Harold Scott and Jeff Watters
Copyrighted 1917 by Broadway Music Corp.


Autograph
WORD ROLL
507
There's a Lump of Sugar Down in Dixie
Cello Rag Fox Trot
Words by Alfred Bryan & Jack Yellen
Music by Albert Gumble
Played by Max Kortlander, Assisted by A. H.
Copyrighted 1918 by Jerome H. Remick

THE Q R S CATALOG

A Status Report

Many of you have been waiting patiently for Mike Montgomery's QRS catalog of 10,000 word rolls to be published. We first mentioned this project in the March 1963 Newsletter; but if this is news to you, Mike for some years has been preparing a numerical and alphabetically indexed list of QRS piano rolls issued from 1916 (when the first QRS word rolls started) to the present. Inasmuch as 1966 is the 50th anniversary of the QRS word roll, and since the Imperial Industrial Company has been taken over by Ramsi Tick, who moved the factory and headquarters to Buffalo this summer and who changed the corporate name to QRS Music Rolls, Inc., there are several compelling reasons for getting the project completed for the benefit of collectors, dealers and customers.

Mike reports that he has had 99% of the 10,000 listings for some time but that publication and production expense, his own busy schedule and recent move from New York back to Detroit have put the project in limbo during recent months.

While in New York, Mike checked the company files and found they contained over two-thirds of the actual QRS labels used in the past. These he has arranged on large sheets in numerical order. Mike has concluded that the easiest and fastest way to finish the job will be to reproduce the labels in a slightly reduced size (by 25%) so they will still be legible. Doing this will eliminate untold hours and dollars spent in typewriting, typesetting and proofreading. It will also make the numerical section of the catalog a great deal more useful because those who are interested will be able to determine easily such data as composer and publisher credits, copyright dates, and the like. The catalog will also be much more interesting visually because you will be looking at pictures of the actual labels.

Mike needs help, though, before he can turn the project over to the printer--the loan of some 3,000 QRS roll boxes with complete labels, in legible, better-than-average condition so he can photograph them and use the resulting label photos to fill in the missing gaps. You can help by listing for Mike the serial numbers of the QRS word roll labels in your collection. Mike will then tell you which ones he would like to borrow and will ask you to ship him the empty boxes. He will return them as soon as possible and will pay postage both ways. All assistance given will be fully acknowledged in a special section of the finished catalog, and collectors who offer substantial help (with 100 or more labels) will receive a complimentary catalog. (The book will probably retail for about $10 when published and will also contain artist photos and biographies and a history of the company.)

If you feel you have too many QRS roll labels to list, Mike will probably be able to furnish you with a list of what he needs. Right now, though, that will be a long list. As the list gets smaller, we'll be able to publish the missing label numbers. But for the time being, let Mike know what help you can provide. Address all correspondence to:

Mike Montgomery
18315 Santa Barbara
Detroit, Michigan 48221

Winging It with TOM SHEA

How are you supposed to play ragtime? The conservatives say you should follow the composers' instructions and "play as written." They've got a system. The liberals say that systems are bunk. They say you should "wing it." After all, that's the way the original performers did it.

It's an old disagreement and one that's not apt to be settled soon. Both sides can make a case for their point of view on the basis of precedent because from the very first there was a difference between how it was supposed to be played and how it was actually performed.

Brun Campbell, Willie the Lion Smith, Axel Christensen, and many others who were around in the days of ragtime past have told us how rags were embellished, changed rhythmically, and in other ways modified by the early performers, Negro and white, whether they played on the vaudeville stage or in some shanty town bar. Each performer had his own style and never played a rag the same way twice, giving full sway to the inspiration or requirements of the moment. For them, the performers, ragtime systems or methods were unnecessary and unsuitable, and indeed their use would seem to be at odds with the usual character of American Negro music.

In spite of this, ragtime systems which sought to eliminate improvisation were numerous and were advocated by American Negroes like Joplin and Scott. They ranged from simple instructions to "play exactly as written" to complete, step-by-step ragtime textbooks. It's interesting to speculate on how these systems came to be used.

The motives of a man like Axel Christensen are obvious. He sold ragtime on a volume basis and needed to make his musical merchandise simple and easy to learn. He says, "It seemed to me that the time was ripe for a method which would overcome the difficulties encountered in individual improvisation...a system which would standardize the fundamentals of syncopation for the piano, and enable all pianists, amateur or professional, to grasp the idea quickly, easily, and inexpensively."

The motives of a Joplin or a Scott with less of a commercial orientation are not so clear, however. Why did they apparently try to isolate rag from the heart of Negro music by denying it any reference to the blues or to improvisation? Wilfred Mellers, in his book MUSIC IN A NEW FOUND LAND, says that with ragtime the Negro tried "to create a notated form of piano music that would be his own contribution to 'art.' This was piano rag..." Did the Joplins and the Scotts feel that this new Negro art form must emulate the techniques of white classical music if there was to be any hope for its acceptance and eventual respectability? Did they feel that white art with its insistence on meticulous precision and interpretive rather than creative performance was somehow superior to Negro art?

Another possibility, one that is closer to the spirit of Negro music, is given us by W. C. Handy in his book, A TREASURY OF THE BLUES. He also gave specific instructions for playing his near rags - but with an important difference. He said that,"(1)they should be played slowly; (2) but in meticulous time; (3) for a while at least, the white man should play them exactly as written - that his subsequent embellishments (if any) may be in character...."

Handy's system was only a means of making sure that the white musician - who would probably have little or no first hand knowledge of Negro musical performance - would become familiar with good Negro musical writing. Handy was not opposed to improvisation, he just wanted to make it authentic. Could this have been the original intent of the ragtime composers?

* * *

We got A reply to the first "Winging It" column. (C'mon, gang, you can do better than that.) My thanks to Horace Schmidt for sending this letter.

"That writer in the last issue of Tom Shea's 'Winging It' column touched on something that has been bugging me for some time. There have been some rumblings regarding the performance of ragtime piano, implying that ragtime must be played in a certain manner or it isn't true ragtime.

"The writer hits something tender when he refers to 'cool rags' and 'starched-backed old ladies.' The implication here is what I call the European influence on ragtime performances. Our culture is European based and our music before the turn of the century was largely the product of that continent's composers. We had our folk music too, but that was Irish, German, and Scottish folk song adapted to the American scene.

"When Negro ragtime was published, the white people in their quest for understanding formed three factions. One went the way of all flesh and the result was the Tin Pan Alley white wash. Another was made of accomplished musicians who could read the more complex 'new music' and played it straight, note for note. The third group were the professionals who played rags according to their own style.

"The first group has been dismissed with the flapper. The third group is almost non-existent. The second group seems to have had the greatest influence on the serious ragtime student today. The accomplished musicians of this group were usually somebody like your great aunt Maude who learned how to play 'Alice Blue Gown' and the like in the popular style of the day. She learned piano by studying Chopin, Mozart, Mendelssohn, etc., and the classical manner of expression and perfection.

"We are the direct descendants of this culture and the result is that we believe our rags should be played straight and starched. Also, how many of us or our aunts, uncles or grandparents have ever heard Negro ragtimers play? The closest description I've ever heard to a real ragtime performer was a little old white lady who played a 'funny' old-time piano in a Baltimore or Indianapolis bar (I can't remember which).

"Starched ragtime may be the way most of the Society members think it should be played, but I believe our real clue is in the third group. We should look to Joe Lamb, Brun Campbell, Luckey Roberts, and the few recorded old-time professionals who have heard and played ragtime. Aunt Minnie meant well and tried hard, but Roberts, Blake, Johnson, et. al. know how it's done."

SOCIAL NOTES (cont'd)

This past summer has been the most active, ragwise, in living memory. First there was our own 'Bash' at the Arpin pad, then the very successful Ragtime Festival on board the Goldenrod showboat in St. Louis where Treb & Co. held forth, and this was followed by what was billed as the "Detroit Rent Party No. 1" on August 21st. This latter event erupted at the home of Mike and Sue Montgomery and featured Max Morath as "The Guest of Honor." Also in attendance were Bob Wright, John Arpin, Tom Shea, Charlie Rasch, Bob Seeley and just about anyone else you care to name. A great, great party, Mike, and just a warmup for "No. 2" -- we hope!

To all the cats who made these outings swing, we respectfully dedicate the following article: "Dixieland Jazz Better Tonic Than 3 Martinis" -- ain't it the truth!

Dixieland Jazz Better Tonic Than 3 Martinis

The amateur Dixielanders—a mixed bag of sufferting artists

By Sid Moody
Of the Associated Press

I am the third best amateur Dixieland trombonist in New Jersey.

I know because I've heard the other two.

They, and I, are members of a lost tribe of minstrels in a world of electronic guitars and bearded balladeers. We don't desire to become members of the order of the British Empire like the Beatles. We don't have goatees or a message for Ho Chi Minh or need a bongoist in a fez who wakes up once a night to thump a rattlesnake tail on a tambourine.

All we want is a quorum that knows "Wolverine Blues" and "At the Jazz Band Ball" and can play them. Loud. And well, too, but it's not mandatory.

For to play is the thing, even if only for our wives who have heard it all may times before and may be getting just a little tired of it all—and of each other.

Not Fight—She Switched

I know of one Dixieland widow who switched rather than fight it. She is Verna Hobson, private secretary of physicist J. Robert Oppenheimer. Her late husband, Wilder, book critic for Newsweek, played trombone. Verna became bored sitting in the rear of country clubs, rumpus rooms and halls waiting for Wilder to finish or some one to ask her to dance. So she asked him what instrument was easy to learn. "Tuba," he said. She is now the best amateur female Dixieland tuba-ist in Princeton, N. J. and probably would be even if there were any others.

Dixie buffs are a mixed bag, some rich, some poor. Some good, some not so good. About all they have in common is a deep aversion to "When the Saints Go Marchin' In" which they regard as fondly as Bing Crosby must "When the Blue of the Night Meets the Gold of the Day."

Fire's Gone Out

The amateur Dixielander could well be vintage enough to have voted for Coolidge and has long since burned his draft card behind him. He probably has had his much-repaired instrument since college and there are as many cornets around that Bix Beiderbecke allegedly played as beds George Washington slept in.

We amateur Dixielandists are a highly itinerant group, often because for some reason we aren't asked back to the same place twice. When we do organize a combo, word gets around and people start asking us to play for benefits, parties and such, usually for free but with drinks on the house—Dixielanders feel as fraternally towards a dry host as they do to Ringo Starr.

The Dixie buff will go anywhere, any time to play for anything or nothing, some one or no one. What he needs most is a home. One such is provided by Larry Pratt, a Manhattan lawyer, pianist, trombonist and patron of the arts. Once a month he rents a hall in the Polish National Home on New York's lower East Side and invites about 40 or so musicians and their friends.

Of All People!

On a given night you might hear John Bucher, a Wall Street broker and the fastest cornet in the East (he really does have a Bix horn); Dr. Harold Taylor, former head of Sarah Lawrence College; Jack Wells, a Boston doctor; Hart Levitt, a prep school English master; Arnold Roth, a cartoonist; Burr Wishart, a Presbyterian minister; and a Frenchman generally known as Jacques who plays an exquisite soprano sax.

A true Dixielandist lives for a playing date, or gig. His job is purely a necessity which he sometimes dismisses as "my daytime gig."

"I'd like to hear you play sometime," said a classical trumpet teacher at the Manhattan School of Music. "It would be a change to hear some one play just for the fun of it."

But sometimes Dixielanders might feel like two passenger pigeons sitting on a limb and saying to each other: "Where are all the others?"

"After a while you get to see the same old faces," said Bucher, who plays about two nights a week around New York.

The Peabody?

"You begin to see the same faces in the audience, too.

"Whenever I play over in New Jersey, there's always a couple that comes to listen and dance 'the Peabody' whatever that is. But you wonder where the next generation is coming from."

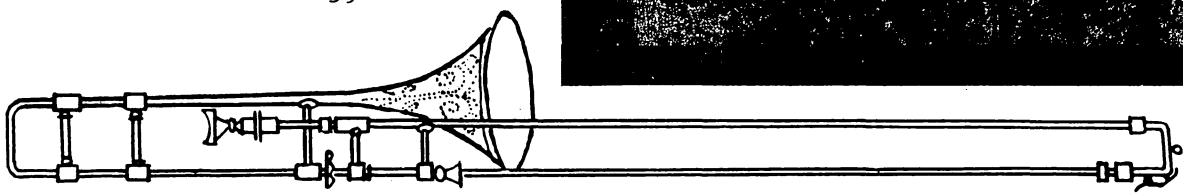
Well, if the Peabody, whatever it is, can hang on, and if knickers are coming back and raccoon coats already have, and if Eddie Condon's is still open, maybe Dixieland is not yet ready for the funeral march.

After all, there's no greater tonic in this world, none, not even three quick martinis, than to come home beaten and bewildered by bosses and commuters, slam the door to the den, turn on the hi-fi and bray along with a record of "Basin St. Blues." That's how to get even with the world.

And there is nothing so splendid as to roar along apres moi, le deluge, slide into the horn and feel the whole band pick up behind you. Nothing.

So you might understand the story they tell of a jazz buff I know who played so often his wife gave him an ultimatum: the horn or her.

He's still playing horn.



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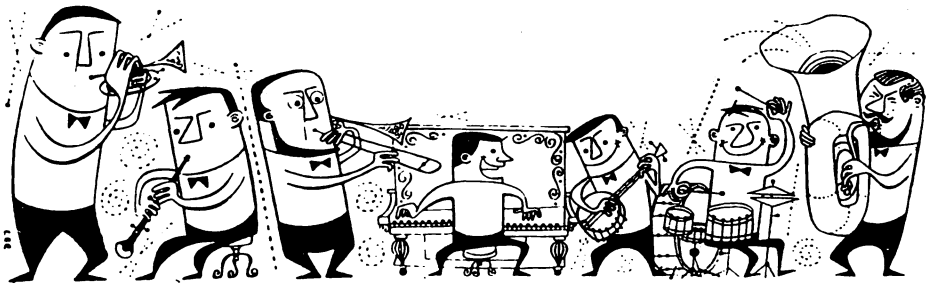

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FROM THE SECRETARY'S DESK:

Congratulations to Tom Shea for winning eighth place in the recent Jazzology jazz poll. Tom won over Thelonious Monk, Hoagy Carmichael (of 'Star Dust' fame) and Bob Helm as best composer, tying with Harry Godwin and Kid Ory.

The Detroit Public Library on Woodward Avenue now includes among it LP collection all the Society-produced records. Those who prefer to sample the goods before buying may hear them at the Library.

Ragtime Dollar Bill is still playing at Molly Brown's Restaurant in Denver, Colo. Bob Darch is working in and around the Omaha area, as is Johnny Maddox, having returned from a summer stint at Regina, Saskatchewan.

The A. W. Perry & Sons Music Store of Sedalia, Missouri, was sold at public auction on Friday, September 9th. Among the items mentioned was the Knabe Concert Grand, vintage 1880 (see Newsletter Vol. 4, No. 6).....

"In the front sales room stands a large concert piano three times the size of the standard instrument. This was where Scott Joplin, the father of ragtime music and all the syncopated sounds that were to follow, sat to play for Austin Perry...." (Bill Hill writing in the Sedalia Democrat). Perhaps someone in the Sedalia area would let us know the final disposition of this piano.

Mike Schwimmer of WEEF, Chicago's North Shore AM & FM outlet, tells us about the Stinson Record Company's releases, one of which is an LP of James P. Johnson. To be placed on their mailing list, write them at P.O. Box 3415, Granada Hills, California. 91344.

In answer to a request from Bob Ashforth, our member in The Hague, G. A. Silas, tells us about his record collection. He started his collection in 1934 with traditional and mainstream jazz, adding blues and ragtime numbers as he progressed into it deeper. The publication in 1950 of 'They All Played Ragtime' of course added impetus to the ragtime end of it, and he has been a staunch supporter of the Society's LP's. His collection is not restricted to ragtime, however, since he is also very interested in calypso, Strauss waltzes, zither and balalaika music, Dutch street organ, bagpipe, mariachi, steel band, cha-cha music, and last but not least, American country and western. How many of us have an interest range as wide as that of Mr. Silas?

If you're in Ann Arbor on a Sunday afternoon, drop into Bimbo's Pizza Parlor in the downtown area and listen to Mother's Boys hold forth with Ragtime and Hot Jazz.